

FAITH AND UNITY



The Journal of the Council
for the
Defence of Church Principles

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Threepence

POINTERS

The Error of Inauguration of the South India Scheme of Union is clearly set out in an Appeal addressed to the Joint Committee on Church Union in S. India, which we publish on page 100. To implement the Scheme at this time is, it is urged, to override the conscientious objections of a large minority of Churchmen, to disregard the opinion of the Lambeth Conference and the warnings of learned and saintly scholars and theologians, and to set back the whole cause of Christian unity. Is it too late to hope that even now the Joint Committee may realize the disunity which inauguration will bring in its train, and may be willing to delay and think again?

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The Wrong Course. Writing in his Diocesan Magazine for February, the Bishop of Bombay says: "I am just back from a General Council held for the first and no doubt the last time at Madras, where once again the wrong course has been taken. Right down to 1943 I was a steady supporter of the South Indian Scheme and was glad that our Diocesan Council gave it general approval. I did not then imagine for a moment the General Council, when the Scheme came up for its detailed final approval, would fail to insist that the things acknowledged to be wrong in it should be put right before final detailed approval was given. You all know this was not done. The Council was persuaded to approve the Scheme with no guarantee whatever that the details which are wrong would be put right."

"Whereas down to 1943 I used to think that there was every hope that in such matters there would be a real growing together,

as it was often called, I now feel that humanly speaking there is no ground for such hope : that is to say, that whereas this seemed to be the intention of the uniting parties, their intention now seems to be the opposite. . . .

"What we had to decide (at Madras) was whether or not to go back on the interpretation of what is called the Pledge put out by ourselves and Lambeth in 1930. . . .

"That meant much to us, but needless to say the Council has given way, and in so doing has done what it has consistently done whenever any serious matter of principle has come up. It has always given way. That is why I can no longer feel confidence in the future of the United Church in South India. That is why I have come away from Madras and shall be leaving India with a sad heart."

We think this opinion of an Indian Bishop, once a supporter of the Scheme, may help to open the eyes of us here at home to the significance of this final collapse of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. The Bishop is not leaving India on account of this decision of the General Council—he had already resigned his see—but to all Catholics who are now working in India there has now come a grave responsibility of a choice which, however it is made, must be utterly distressing.

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A Comparison of the Votes Cast in the General Council of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon in January this year and in January 1945 reveals a noticeable growth in the opposition to the South India Scheme, and a lessening vote in its favour. Thus the Bishops voted 6 to 4 in 1945, and 7 to 6 in 1947 : the Clergy voted 38 to 10 in 1945, and 30 to 22 in 1947 : the Laity voted 31 to 7 in 1945, and 33 to 7 in 1947. The total vote of all three Houses together was 75 to 21 in 1945, and 70 to 35 in 1947. A majority of 54 in 1945 in the space of two years dropped to one of 35 in 1947.

This seems to show that the more the Scheme is known the less acceptable it becomes to Churchmen. But for all that the inauguration of the Scheme is not to be delayed. Have the South Indian Bishops, who so press forward, forgotten what is written in the Basis of Union, that "they pledge themselves . . . at all times (to) be careful not to allow any over-riding of conscience either by Church authorities or by majorities" ?

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Reunion by Anticipation, our new Pamphlet No. 12, by the Rev. B. P. Burnett, is now ready and can be had either from the Secretary of the Council or from Pax House. The price is one shilling, by post 1/1. The pamphlet is well worth reading and study, and we publish some extracts on page 104. Will our readers please note that the Pax House has now removed from Dacre Street to new premises at 57 Buckingham Gate, London,

S.W. 1, where they will find the full range of our leaflets and pamphlets on sale.

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Our Travelling Secretary, Fr. Harry Howard, will be addressing meetings during April at the following places:—

April 15th. Reading.
„ 16th. Twyford.
„ 17th. Ascot Heath.
„ 18th. Woodley.
„ 20th. Wokingham: Preach at Mass at St. Paul's.

During the first week of May he will be in the Cardiff area, and during the second half of the month in Newcastle and Durham, and later in Lincolnshire. Details will be published next month.

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A Large Number of Subscriptions to *Faith and Unity* will fall due for renewal with our issue for the month of May, which will be Number 12 in our series. It will be an immense saving of clerical work for the Secretary and his one voluntary helper if those whose subscriptions expire in May will renew them for the next twelve months now, without our sending them a notice of reminder. Please look up your accounts for last year and see how much you sent us then, and if you can manage it, please send us at least as much, and if you can, even something more.

Why do we ask for more? We do so, because our costs for printing are larger now than they were a year ago, and may have to be increased yet again: because we now have a full-time Travelling Secretary who has to be paid: because there is real need that the work of the Council should go on and be extended. We must not relax our efforts in defence of Church principles. The surrender of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon over the South India Scheme will encourage further efforts to push on with other schemes of a like kind, and it is necessary that Church people should all be brought to see that the precious heritage of Catholic Faith and Order which we hold in trust—it is not ours to give away, even if we would—is being attacked and is in real danger of being lost. But the work of defence and the work of teaching cannot go on unless the necessary money is found to pay for it. So please help us as liberally as you can, and please do it NOW, before you forget.

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The Delay in the Distribution of our March issue was due to causes over which neither we nor our printers had any control. It was due to the cut in electricity supplies and the ban on the printing and publication of weekly and monthly periodicals. Our readers may blame the weather, present or past Governments, or whom they will, but please not us or our printers, who managed distribution sooner than we had dared to hope.

SOUTH INDIA—AN APPEAL

The following Appeal has been written and sent at the request of the C.D.C.P. to the Joint Committee on Church Union in S. India. It was signed by Fr. Joseph, S.S.J.E., Acting Chairman of the Council, Canon Blood, Secretary, and Fr. Raynes, C.R., a member of the Council. Cross headings have been inserted.—Ed.

It has been stated in the Press that the Joint Negotiating Committee proposes to inaugurate the South India Reunion Scheme on September 1st of this year. While we do not challenge their legal competence to do so, we consider it necessary to state our profound conscientious opinion that to take such action now would be a grave error, the cause of much spiritual distress to many Christians of varying traditions, and a hindrance to the promotion of the unity of Christendom. Our reasons for making such a statement can be summarized as follows :—

THE VOTING ON THE SCHEME

I. The voting at the General Council in January 1945 showed a considerable minority against the scheme. It is particularly to be noted that this was the case in the House of Bishops. In a matter of such far-reaching importance, involving as it does the life, the faith and the order of the Church, we have every right to expect if not complete unanimity, at any rate a weighty majority of the bishops immediately concerned ; for they are the ultimate guardians of the Faith.

In the recent voting on the interpretation of the Pledge the same thing has occurred. In the House of Bishops the interpretation of the S.I.U.C. was accepted by a majority of one. (Even the value of that is lessened when it is remembered that of the Bishops voting in favour, four were already almost committed to the Scheme.) In the House of Clergy there was only a majority of eight. To inaugurate the Scheme upon such a majority is impatiently to disregard the consciences of the minority, and in our opinion to act in a manner not in accordance with Christian charity, nor indeed with the principles of arriving at the truth. The existence of such a minority should be a warning that the inauguration of the new Church of South India is likely to produce confusion, distress of mind and conscience, and contains all the seeds of future misunderstanding, which may well lead to schism within the new Church itself as well as outside it. History should teach us that the most fruitful cause of schism in the past has been impatience and the disregard of the consciences of others. It is fatally easy to try to move faster than the Holy Spirit Himself.

OPINION OF THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE

2. It seems clear that when the Lambeth Conference "encouraged" the Scheme in 1930 it expected that it would come under review again at the 1940 Conference at Lambeth before it was inaugurated. It is now proposed (despite the large minority of bishops in India who voted against it), to inaugurate the new Church less than a year before the next Lambeth Conference, thus presenting the Conference with a *fait accompli* and raising the question whether different Provinces of the Anglican Church will be in communion with South India or not, with the subsequent complications of their relationship to one another. Considering that the Scheme has undergone very considerable changes since 1940—many of which have caused increasing doubt in the minds of many—prudence would suggest that to delay the inauguration until after the Lambeth Conference 1948, and to ascertain the opinion of the Conference and to accept its advice, is the wise and charitable course to pursue. While it may be true that for thirty years the matter has been under consideration, this is not very long when we are seeking the way to heal wounds which have persisted for nearly 400 years or longer and when our ultimate aim, under God, is the restoration of the unity of the whole Church of God.

3. We are strengthened in this opinion when we recall the fact that the Lambeth Conference Consultative Committee declared in 1943 that the changes in the Scheme would make approval by a Lambeth Conference of the present proposals more difficult. Moreover, the Report of the Committee of Theologians appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury cannot be said to give whole-hearted approval of the Scheme, though a majority of the Committee thinks that the Scheme should go forward. The report shows considerable doubts about particular points, and lists six important matters upon which it regards as being likely to be essential that amendment shall be made in the Constitution of the Church—significantly enough the first one being "that the Statement of the Faith of the Church should be so re-drafted as to place the adherence of the Church of South India to the historic faith of the Church Catholic beyond question". One member of the Committee regards the Scheme as having deteriorated so seriously in its later forms that as it now stands he regards it as unacceptable.

THE WARNINGS OF THEOLOGICIANS

4. Further, it cannot be denied that the Scheme is based upon a theology now largely discredited among competent scholars. This is particularly true of the theology of the Church, Ministry and Sacraments in the Scheme. Recent study and writing of scholars and theologians of varying traditions and different denominations

is leading us to a clearer conception of fundamental truth ; showing what is essential and what non-essential, removing misunderstandings and pointing the way to a real unity of faith which is the pre-requisite of any real reunion of separated Christian bodies. In this new, positive and realistic theology there is great hope, and we believe that it is the answer to the prayers of Christians of all denominations that God the Holy Spirit would lead us back into the Truth and into real union one with another. It is certain that for the members of varying denominations to grasp and assimilate what we are now being taught will take time, and it would be a mistake to implement a local scheme of reunion at this moment which is calculated to be the cause of controversial theology and blur the vision which is opening before us.

5. It appears that the warnings of such learned and saintly scholars as Charles Gore, Armitage Robinson, Archbishop Green, and others, have been too easily passed over. We cannot forget that Robinson warned us that until we were much closer together in common liturgical worship as well as in the Faith, the reconstitution of separated ministries under episcopal order is liable to break down at the first real strain. And further, in granting away of the episcopal succession to communities that do not share our deepest convictions as to the nature and function of the Church, we shall find that the Episcopate no longer stands for any real Unity at all. "A new schism headed by bishops is a contingency too horrible to contemplate ; and a rash external reunion might easily lead to it."

We have further been warned that we should not be loyal to the Early Church if we accept a diminished Sacrament in place of the full Eucharist of Catholic antiquity, and we cannot dissociate the celebration of the Eucharist from our necessary interpretation of the Historic Episcopate.

It is deep-seated convictions such as these which underlie the opposition to the Scheme of many earnest Christians, including a considerable minority of the bishops of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, not to mention bishops of other Provinces of the Anglican Communion. The recent discussion on the interpretation of the pledge does nothing to reassure us. It is perhaps worthy of record that Dr. Dvornik, a Roman Catholic theologian, expresses apprehension lest the Anglican Communion be content to look for some vague formula to federate denominations and make confusion more confounded, and in the process lose the position she now holds in helping towards reuniting the whole of Christendom.

DIFFICULTIES OF CONSCIENCE.

6. Finally, we are unhappy in our consciences as to how far the half-million members of the Anglican Church are fully aware as to what lies before them, and to what they have been committed.

We have reason to doubt that they are aware of this. And while we cannot speak for the other denominations concerned, it is a question whether their adherents are aware of the full implications. Unless this is so, there is every reason to believe that dissident congregations will spring up and add to our divisions and further bewilder men's minds and consciences.

It is for these reasons and others of less importance that we are compelled to state that it is our conscientious conviction that to inaugurate "the new Church" now would be a disastrous error and a definite set-back to the cause of reunion, from which it would take years to recover. It is a moral duty (as Archbishop Temple stated) to make a frank and clear statement if there is conscientious conviction that grave harm will result to the Church as a whole.

We therefore appeal to the Joint Negotiating Committee, even at this late hour, to refrain from implementing the Scheme as it now stands, and from inaugurating the new Church in September, in order to allow the whole matter to come under review at the Lambeth Conference in 1948. This would be an act of charity towards thousands of Christians of all denominations who are profoundly disturbed, as well as an act of "respect of conscience"—a principle firmly held by Anglicans and at the very heart of Nonconformist piety and religion.

We do not challenge the right of the Joint Committee now to inaugurate the Church nor do we doubt their sincerity in wishing to do so. We appeal to them not to insist upon their rights nor to doubt our sincerity in asking them to do this. We are convinced that patience now would bear much fruit and lead us to that better thing which God has in store for us.

BOOK NOTE

The Apostolicity of the Church is clearly explained in the latest of the Mirfield Books recently published by the Dacre Press. The title of the book is *The Why and Wherefore of the Church*; its author is Fr. Andrew Blair, C.R.; and its price is 2s. 6d. After an opening chapter on the Birth of the Church, there follow three chapters on the Apostles' Doctrine, Fellowship and Worship. The next two chapters deal with the Sacraments, and in a short concluding chapter the author pleads that in this Apostolic Church and Faith is to be found "that Pearl of Great Price for which the human race has been so long and so restlessly seeking."

In each chapter the author shows how the teaching and practice of the Church is Apostolic, and how the Church of England in her Prayer Book formularies is faithful to and binds herself to the Apostolic tradition. We strongly recommend the book to all who are concerned about the defence of Church principles.

REUNION BY ANTICIPATION

Quotations from our new Pamphlet

Deliberate ambiguity has been adopted for obvious reasons. Without it, the Free Churches would automatically have been confessing that they have been wrong since the founding of their bodies. Any sharply defined doctrine would immediately have led to sharp controversy, and so has been avoided. Many critics have felt, and rightly I believe, that it is what the scheme leaves unsaid more than what it says that is so dangerous.

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Since all members of the uniting churches, whether baptized or not at the time of the inauguration, form the initial membership of the united church, it is conceivable that among future ordinands will be those who have never been baptized. So far as I can discover in the scheme, there is no safeguard against the choice of an ordinand from among these unbaptized initial members.

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The Bishop of Oxford made a statement that the scheme was being imposed upon people in India who had had little or no say in the decision. For this he was called, euphemistically, a liar. Let us see whether there is any truth in the statement. I speak only of the diocese of Dornakal. The scheme has never been printed in Telugu, the only language understood by the vast majority of the diocese. Almost all the clergy have been trained under the direct supervision of Bishop Azariah, whose passionate enthusiasm for this scheme is well known. Although a great man, he was a dictator and very impatient of opposition. His will was generally law. To one who has worked in the diocese under Bishop Azariah, it is not surprising that the Standing Committee, over 80 per cent of whom were subordinates of the Bishop, recorded unanimously a favourable vote. The people have heard practically no criticism of the scheme, and have certainly never thought out its implications.

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In a village near Nandyal, I found the congregation under the impression that we were uniting with the Baptists and the Roman Catholics, who happened to be the neighbouring missions.

Communications for the Editor and subscriptions to *Faith and Unity* (three shillings a year minimum) should be sent to the **Secretary, C.D.C.P., 6 Perth Road, Beckenham, Kent.** Back numbers of *Faith and Unity* are available and can be had from the Secretary, price fourpence each, post free.
